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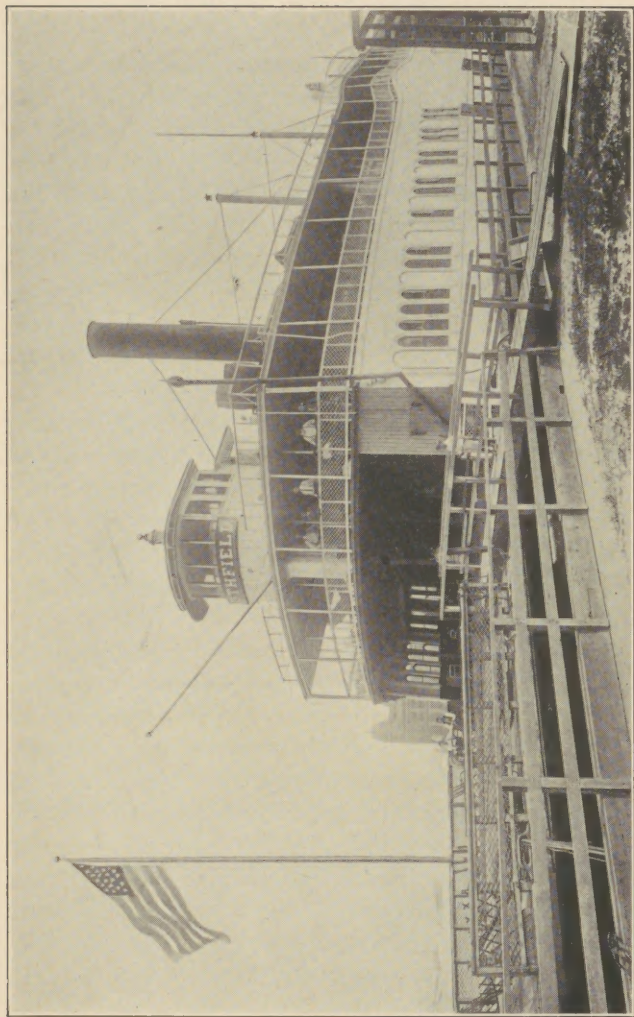
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REPORT  
ON THE  
TUBERCULOSIS WORK  
OF  
Bellevue Hospital and  
Dispensary

*Presented to the*  
**Statistical Division, Surgeon-General's**  
**Library, United States Army**  
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DAY CAMP SOUTHFIELD, BELLEVUE HOSPITAL

As short a space of time as five years ago the scourge of consumption in the City of New York was looked upon as a thing quite incapable of combating. There were at a low estimate twenty thousand persons affected with the disease filling the tenements, contaminating workrooms and factories, and endangering the health of society by daily and unrestricted intercourse in street and public carriages. Tuberculosis was looked upon as incurable, and there was a possibility within as few as the five years of the number of cases of tuberculosis being doubled, possibly trebled, while the city felt itself powerless to check the contagion.

But the knowledge having come to the medical world that tuberculosis is curable in its early stages, that the curative measures, fresh air, sunlight and nourishing food are at hand, first through organized charities and then through its great city clinics, New York began five years ago its organized campaign against the disease.

From the first it seemed that the campaign must be one of education. In some way the instruction of patients, often foreigners, ignorant members of the social unit and widely separated from dispensaries and clinics must be effected. The method by which such education has been carried on, and the death rate from the disease materially reduced through co-operation of physicians, hospitals, and charitable organizations forms a social phenomenon of wide-spread interest.

Public lectures, mainly stereopticon, with models, charts and photographs, are being given by the



Committee on the Prevention of Tuberculosis of the Charity Organization Society reaching probably half a million people in New York, but the more important work of the campaign has been done through the establishment of ten special tuberculosis clinics, and the organizing of a system of dispensaries by which the city is divided into tuberculosis districts, and the work is co-ordinated and simplified by the division, and the overlapping or duplication of effort is prevented.

The work of the several dispensaries is similar, but a large city hospital naturally reaching a larger number of patients, the methods employed by the Bellevue Tuberculosis Clinic may be cited as representative of New York's crusade against the Great White Plague.

In 1904 the special tuberculosis clinic was formed at Bellevue Hospital by the disintegration of patients who had formerly been referred to and treated in the general medical clinic. One visiting nurse was employed at first, and the number of cases treated during the first year was 604. From September, 1907, to September, 1908, 1,313 new patients were admitted.

At the present time four graduate nurses are employed in the tuberculosis department, while one pupil nurse is assigned each six weeks for the training.

Over one hundred new patients in addition to the regular monthly average of over four hundred patients come each month to Bellevue Clinic for treatment for tuberculosis.

The active work of the clinic consists in the care-

ful medical examination of the patient after which the case is referred to the visiting nurse.

The seat of the disease is the crowded city tenement with its filth, its dirt, air-shaft room and its poverty; and to the tenement Bellevue directs its work of education.

Within a week of his time of reporting at the dispensary and subsequently once a month each patient is visited in his home by a trained nurse. Housing conditions, including character of rooms whether light or dark, ventilation and general cleanliness are carefully noted. The character of industry done in the apartment, the habits of patients and the available roof, pier or park space for fresh air treatment are noted in the nurse's report, and the nurse endeavors to ascertain if the patient is carrying out in his home the instructions received at the Clinic. General instructions as to the personal cleanliness and care of sputum are given.

The nurse becomes familiar with the family needs, and cases of extreme destitution are reported to the proper charitable society. The necessary diet is arranged through the co-operation of the several diet kitchens which distribute milk and eggs at the nurse's order.

To the visiting nurse belongs also the work of referring to a special children's clinic at Bellevue the children of tuberculous parents.

The Children's Clinic, held twice a week at Bellevue dispensary has within the year of its inception, examined and treated over two hundred children, many of whom were found to be in the incipient stage of tuberculosis; some of the children were sent



CHILDREN'S TUBERCULOSIS CLINIC, BELLEVUE HOSPITAL



to sanatoria, others were sent to the country, and in this treatment of children predisposed to tuberculosis lies the city's hope of preventing the spread of the disease in the next generation.

In the spring of 1907 the Committee on the Prevention of Tuberculosis of the Charity Organization Society decided to establish a day camp for the tuberculosis patients under treatment at the dispensaries of the Association of Tuberculosis Clinics. The problem of securing a land site in New York seemed more difficult than in almost any other city because of the overcrowded condition of the public parks and roofs and the impossibility of obtaining transportation to any out of town site which might be secured. A floating day camp seemed to be the best solution and in June of the same year, Mr. John A. Bensel Commissioner of Docks of the City of New York placed at the disposal of the Committee the Southfield, an old Staten Island ferry boat. The boat was moored at the end of West 16th street pier and a corps of workers with soap, scrubbing brushes and paint soon effected its thorough cleaning and renovating. Under the direction of the committee the boat was then furnished with the necessary equipment for a day camp.

Patients were referred to the boat from the Associated City Clinics. Three patients came for treatment on June 17th, 1907, the date when the boat was given over for active use and within a comparatively short space of time this number had increased to sixty a day with many new applicants.

The floating camp, having proved its efficiency,



is this year under the support of Bellevue Hospital in conjunction with the Tuberculosis Clinic and is moored in the East River directly back of the hospital.

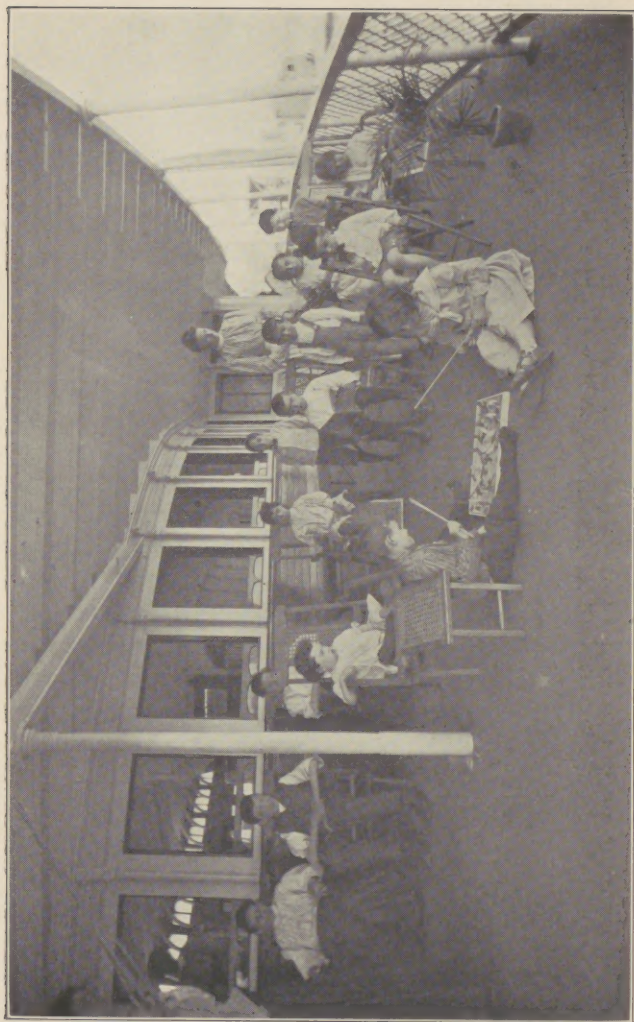
Added improvements in the way of painting and plumbing have been made, and the work is similar to that of last year except that it has grown to much larger proportion.

The central section of the lower deck is used as a store room, bunks having been torn out and shelves built in where dishes and food supplies are kept. In the passage way leading to the stairs a kitchen is located. Two cabins are furnished as dining rooms, and two as bath rooms for men and women respectively, while the gangway has been converted into a rest room by curtaining it off from the main entrance to the boat. An upper cabin is used as an office for doctors and nurses, cupboards being built in for medicines and working supplies.

The large upper decks are left open so that patients may recline in steamer chairs or lie in hammocks and breathe the life giving sea air.

A trained nurse with a corps of workers consisting of an assistant, two orderlies, a kitchen helper and a waitress is in charge of the camp. The routine work begins at nine in the morning with the arrival of patients and the taking of temperatures, pulse and weight by the nurse in charge. Patients are then served with all the eggs and milk they can take, the amount varying from three to eight eggs a day and as many glasses of milk.

At noon a warm dinner consisting of a soup,



CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT, DAY CAMP SOUTHFIELD

meat and vegetables with an occasional dessert course is given, and the day ends at five.

There is a special place on the boat for the children who are under observation at the Children's Clinic.

To a visitor the children's deck seems like a large, beautiful outdoor play room with the constantly changing panorama of sea craft on the river for a background. There are toys, games and picture books, and blocks to amuse the children, and the babies have one corner of the deck fenced off with a soft rag rug, and furnished with tiny chairs for their own special use.

A trained kindergartner has been employed as an assistant to the nurse in charge, and she conducts games, tells stories, and does a little teaching along the line of language and hand work that the children may be kept busy and happy in addition to being cared for physically.

It is hoped that in the near future the problem of the daily occupation of adult patients will be solved.

The above report shows that Bellevue has been doing its share in the crusade against tuberculosis, but there comes a point where a large city machine is powerless to help the tenements to bear their burden of disease. Public finance cannot furnish the comforts of life which make illness less terrible. It cannot give its charges a season in the country. It cannot provide warm clothing. It cannot send an armful of flowers to a patient who perhaps has not seen a rose for a year. It cannot pay the salary of a kintergartner and furnish her with ma-



terial for amusing the sick little folks on the boat.

At this point, where the city is obliged to confess the inadequacy of its resources, private charity has taken up the work, and in May of the present year, through the efforts of Dr. James Alexander Miller, in charge of the tuberculosis work, at Bellevue Hospital, the Woman's Auxiliary to the Tuberculosis Clinic, was formed. It is composed of a body of New York women deeply interested in the movement. Active members hold weekly meetings at Bellevue Dispensary, their committees caring respectively for the Day Camp, the Clinic and the Tuberculosis Wards, and through this organized effort, the sum of over three hundred dollars a month is distributed for social relief.

The work of the Auxiliary is new, but it has already placed many patients in the country and in sanatoria. It has relieved cases of destitution in the tenements which no other means could have reached, and its semi-weekly boxes of flowers, have made the Tuberculosis Clinic, a most attractive spot for the colorless eyes of the sick man.

Down in a two-room, dark tenement in the vicinity of one of the City Wards, there lives a man who has been a day laborer in New York for his whole lifetime. One child has died of tuberculosis, another has the disease, as has his wife also, and the man himself is in an advanced stage. He is not an object of charity, at least not in his own eyes, although the family often suffers for food. He is possessed of a wonderful pride, which makes the most tactful efforts of the nurse to assist the family, often fruitless. It seems nearly incredible, that in all

his long years in this city, Williams had never seen Central Park.

Of course he had heard of it, a place of enchantment, of green grass, of automobiles, of all the things that he had never had time for. And one day one of the visiting members of the Auxiliary persuaded him to accept the wherewithal to provide car fare, lunch and everything for a day in the park. The whole family went and the children sat by the edge of the road and were quite sure that every carriage which whirled by was going to stop and take them all inside. Why else should there be carriages! They all had their first sight of a squirrel. If they did have to go back to their dark home and their lives of lamp light, the glimpse of the other world which lays so near them, but which they have never stepped inside before made up in a measure of the darkness.

The work of organized charity will grow, and in co-operation with the regular preventive measures of the hospital, it is hoped that a few years will show a marked decrease in the spread of tuberculosis in New York City.

GENEVIEVE WILSON,

Nurse in Charge Tuberculosis Clinic,  
Bellevue Hospital, Out Patient Department.

## EXPENSES OF DAY CAMP FOR 94 DAYS

From June 13th to Sept. 14th.

Equipment ..... \$558.58

### RUNNING EXPENSES.

Wages ..... \$444.37

Supplies ..... 262.95

Medical supplies ..... 31.51

Contingent ..... 25.60

Milk and eggs ..... 526.29

Washing ..... 10.75

Car fares ..... 93.40

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Total ..... \$1,395.87

Total number of attendances ..... 3,781

Average attendance per day. .... 40.2

Total cost per day ..... \$14.23

Total cost per patient ..... 34.23

Total cost per patient per day ..... 0.369





